

§ 2704.109

award shall be made by the Commission against the Department of Labor.

[63 FR 53176, Nov. 12, 1998]

§ 2704.109 Delegations of authority.

The Commission retains authority to take final action on matters pertaining to the Equal Access to Justice Act in actions arising under the Mine Act. The Commission may, however, by order delegate authority to take final action on matters pertaining to the Equal Access to Justice Act in particular cases to other subordinate officials or bodies.

Subpart B—Information Required From Applicants

SOURCE: 63 FR 63176, Nov. 12, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

§ 2704.201 Contents of application—in general.

(a) An application for an award of fees and expenses under the Act shall be made to the Chief Administrative Law Judge of the Commission at 1730 K Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20006. The application shall identify the applicant and the underlying proceeding for which an award is sought.

(b) The application shall state the amount of fees and expenses for which an award is sought. The application may also include a request that attorney's fees be awarded at a rate higher than \$125 per hour because of an increase in the cost of living or other special factors.

(c) The application may also include any other matters that the applicant wishes the Commission to consider in determining whether and in what amount an award should be made.

(d) The application should be signed by the applicant or an authorized officer or attorney of the applicant. It shall also contain or be accompanied by a written verification under oath or under penalty of perjury that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

(e) Upon receipt of an application, the Chief Administrative Law Judge shall immediately assign it for disposition to the administrative law judge

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who presided over the underlying Mine Act proceeding.

§ 2704.202 Contents of application—where the applicant has prevailed.

(a) An application for an award under § 2704.105(a) shall show that the applicant has prevailed in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the underlying proceeding and identify the position of the Department of Labor in the proceeding that the applicant alleges was not substantially justified. Unless the applicant is an individual, the application shall also state the number of employees of the applicant and describe briefly the type and purpose of its organization or business.

(b) The application also shall include a statement that the applicant's net worth does not exceed \$2 million (if an individual) or \$7 million (for all other applicants including their affiliates, as described in § 2704.104(b)(2) of this part).

(c) Each applicant must provide with its application a detailed exhibit showing the net worth of the applicant and any affiliates (as described in § 2704.104(b)(2) of this part) when the underlying proceeding was initiated. The exhibit may be in any form convenient to the applicant that provides full disclosure of the applicant's and its affiliates' assets and liabilities and is sufficient to determine whether the applicant qualifies under the standards in this part. The administrative law judge may require an applicant to file additional information to determine its eligibility for an award.

§ 2704.203 Contents of application—where the Secretary's demand is substantially in excess of the judgment finally obtained and unreasonable.

(a) An application for an award under § 2704.105(b) shall show that the Secretary's demand is substantially in excess of the decision of the Commission; the application shall further allege that the Secretary's demand is unreasonable when compared with the Commission's decision.

(b) The application shall show that the applicant is a small entity as defined in 5 U.S.C. 601(6), and the application must conform to the standards of the Small Business Administration at 13 CFR 121.201 for mining entities. The

application shall include a statement of the applicant's annual receipts or number of employees, as applicable, in conformance with the requirements of 13 CFR 121.104 and 121.106. The application shall describe briefly the type and purpose of its organization or business.

§ 2704.204 Confidential financial information.

Ordinarily, the net-worth and annual-receipts exhibits will be included in the public record of the proceeding. However, an applicant that objects to public disclosure of information in any portion of such exhibits and believes there are legal grounds for withholding the information from disclosure may submit that portion of the exhibit directly to the administrative law judge in a sealed envelope labeled "Confidential Financial Information," accompanied by a motion to withhold the information from public disclosure. The motion shall describe the information sought to be withheld and explain, in detail, why it falls within one or more of the specific exemptions from mandatory disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(1)–(9), why public disclosure of the information would adversely affect the applicant, and why disclosure is not required in the public interest. The material in question shall be served on counsel representing the Secretary of Labor against whom the applicant seeks an award, but need not be served on any other party to the proceeding. If the administrative law judge finds that the information should not be withheld from disclosure, it shall be placed in the public record of the proceeding. Otherwise, any request to inspect or copy the exhibit shall be disposed of in accordance with the established procedures under the Freedom of Information Act (29 CFR part 2702).

§ 2704.205 Documentation of fees and expenses.

The application shall be accompanied by full documentation of the fees and expenses, including the cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project or similar matter, for which an award is sought. A separate itemized statement shall be submitted

for each professional firm or individual whose services are covered by the application, showing the hours spent in connection with the underlying proceeding by each individual, a description of the specific services performed, the rate at which each fee has been computed, any expenses for which reimbursement is sought, the total amount claimed, and the total amount paid or payable by the applicant or by any other person or entity for the services provided. The administrative law judge may require the applicant to provide vouchers, receipts, or other substantiation for any expenses claimed.

§ 2704.206 When an application may be filed.

(a) An application may be filed whenever the applicant has prevailed in the underlying proceeding or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of that proceeding. An application may also be filed when a demand by the Secretary is substantially in excess of the decision of the Commission and is unreasonable when compared with such decision. In no case may an application be filed later than 30 days after the Commission's final disposition of the underlying proceeding, or 30 days after issuance of a court judgment that is final and nonappealable in any Commission adjudication that has been appealed pursuant to section 106 of the Mine Act, 30 U.S.C. 816.

(b) If review or reconsideration is sought or taken of a decision on the merits as to which an applicant has prevailed or has been subjected to a demand from the Secretary substantially in excess of the decision of the Commission and unreasonable when compared to that decision, proceedings for the award of fees shall be stayed pending final disposition of the underlying controversy.

(c) For purposes of this part, final disposition before the Commission means the date on which a decision in the underlying proceeding on the merits becomes final under sections 105(d) and 113(d) of the Mine Act (30 U.S.C. 815(d), 823(d)).